Amendments To The Specification

Please replace the paragraph on page 3, line 31, to page 4, line 2, with the following amended paragraph:

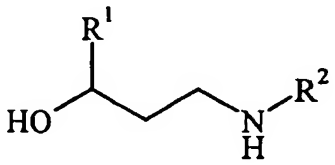
Starting with commercially available methyl ketones and primary amines and/or an addition salt of a proton acid, which were reacted with formaldehyde in the presence a solvent and optionally of a proton acid at a pressure above 1.5 bar ~~*N*-monosubstituted β-amino-ketones~~ *N*-monosubstituted β-keto amine which could be directly reduced to the desired *N*-monosubstituted β-amino alcohols were obtained in high yields.

Please replace the paragraph on page 4, lines 4 to 6, with the following amended paragraph:

As a further advantage of the instant process high yields of ~~*N*-monosubstituted β-amino-ketones~~ *N*-monosubstituted β-keto amine can be obtained by direct usage of methylamine hydrochloride with is easily available, cheap and, since it is a solid compound, easy to handle.

Please replace the paragraph on page 4, line 8, to page 5, line 13, with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention discloses a process for the preparation of a compound formula:

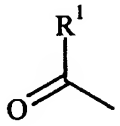


I

and/or an addition salt of a proton acid, wherein R^1 and R^2 independently represent alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl, each being optionally further substituted with alkyl, alkoxy and/or halogen, which process comprises the steps of:

a) reacting a mixture comprising:

(i) a methyl ketone of formula:



IV

wherein R^1 is as defined above, and

(ii) a compound of formula:

$H_2N–R^2$ (V)

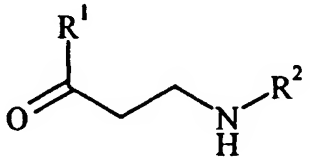
and/or an addition salt of proton acid, wherein R^2 is as defined above, and

(iii) formaldehyde or a source of formaldehyde selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde in aqueous solution, 1,3, 5-trioxane, paraformaldehyde and mixtures thereof, in the presence of

a solvent selected from the group consisting of water, aliphatic alcohols, cycloaliphatic alcohols and mixtures thereof, and

optionally a proton acid

to afford a compound of formula:



II

and/or an addition salt of a proton acid, and

b) reducing the carbonyl group of said ~~β-amino ketone~~ β-keto amine to afford a compound of formula I, and/or an addition salt of a proton acid,

wherein the first step is carried out at a pressure above 1.5 bar.